

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
May 8, 2008**

Attendees

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Dave Carey, Chris Davis, Leigh Keyser, Ray Whipple, Peter Dana, and Lindle Willnow. A quorum was present. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator and Bob Bullivant as Finance Committee liaison were also present.

Discussion of CPA Community Housing Project Idea

Steve Mushkin was present to discuss some ideas he's had on ways to use CPA funds to support community housing in Hamilton. One possibility is for utility companies to conduct energy audits of homes owned by seniors or lower income households. Based on the results of those audits, CPA funds could be used to fund some of the audit recommendations such as window replacement or furnace upgrades. These upgrades could be used to cut energy costs in lower income or senior households. This type of project may qualify under *support* of community housing and would include a *green* component.

Both Steve and Dave Carey spent some time discussing ideas with Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition. While the CPA may be intentionally broad, mortgage and utility assistance is likely beyond the scope of CPA. Capital improvements, however, could be construed as permissible. Homeowners that took advantage of this program may need to place affordability restrictions on their property, or other restrictions such as first-preference resale to Hamilton residents.

There is a sharp difference between income and house value, with many homeowners with low-income living in very valuable homes. This type of program with benefits to private homeowners may not reflect well on CPA. It could be problematic politically and legally. How does DOR define community housing?

CPA Surcharge Exemptions for Seniors and Low-income Households

As permitted by the CPA statute, Hamilton has a CPA surcharge exemption for low-income persons and low or moderate-income seniors. According to the Assessor's office, individuals have come in to file for the exemption. Christine will find out how many people have filed for the extension. Christine will also work on a flyer to distribute to the Council on Aging and post a notice on the Town's website. She will also explore with Robin the possibility of including a flyer in an upcoming tax bill.

Annual Town Meeting Recap

The Committee thanked Tom for doing such a great job with the Town Meeting presentation. A suggestion was made to thank the townspeople for supporting CPA through an article in the Chronicle. Subjects to include in the article are plans going forward, summarizing the projects recommended, and a reminder for people to start thinking about projects now. Christine will work on drafting something and circulate for the Committee to review. CPC members should each send Christine at least one bullet point to include in the write-up.

Asbury Grove Tabernacle

The Asbury Grove Tabernacle project was the only CPA project not recommended for funding by Town Meeting. The project was narrowly rejected with 164 votes for, 179 votes against. The Committee suggested several points that could sway the vote if this project was brought forward to Town Meeting in the future. The Committee recommended that Asbury Grove host a true community event at the Grove, that they conduct an independent audit of their finances, that they demonstrate their fundraising ability, and that they continue to move forward on their application process to have the tabernacle listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Christine will convey these recommendations to Brad Tilley.

Renovations of the Historic Bell at the First Congregational Church of Hamilton

While this project was successful at Town Meeting, the Committee reiterated that its decision to scale back funding to \$11,000 from the original request was a wise one.

Hamilton Wenham Community House Project

This project was also successful at Town Meeting after being held. Wenham's CPC only contributed \$3,000 towards this project. Hamilton's CPC and Board of Selectmen need to be more synced with their respective boards in Wenham for future joint-town projects. Christine will also ask Wenham for their CPA budget.

Replacement of Floor at Old Library

This project was successful at Town Meeting. The Committee felt it was important that Tom mentioned that the floor could be re-used during his presentation.

Weaver Pond at Patton Park

This project was also successful at Town Meeting and did not spark any discussion.

Christine will begin working on a draft calendar for FY 2010 CPA Application Schedule. As soon as it's ready she will circulate for review.

Community Preservation Plan

Christine will re-circulate the most recent draft of Hamilton's Community Preservation Plan. The CPC will work to finalize the plan, circulate amongst Town Boards, and put into final form.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12th at 7:30pm in the Memorial Room at Town Hall.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.